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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

**BAKERSFIELD MARIJUANA DISPENSARY OWNERS INDICTED**  
**AS A CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE**

FRESNO -- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned a seven-count indictment charging DAVID CHAVEZ, Sr., 48, DAVID CHAVEZ, Jr., 28, JOHN WAYNE WYATT, 29, ISRAEL CAVAZOS, 34, JOHN RICHARD SHANKS, 59, JONATHAN M. CHAPMAN, 28, TIMOTHY DOOLITTLE, 39, and JENNIFER DIANE BROWN, 34, all of Bakersfield, with various federal charges relating to the distribution of marijuana. CHAVEZ, SR. and CHAVEZ, JR. are charged with conducting a Continuing Criminal Enterprise in relation to their business, the Nature's Medicinal, Inc., an enterprise engaged almost exclusively in distributing marijuana. The indictment further charges all of the individuals with conspiring to distribute marijuana and with various individual counts of possessing marijuana with the intent to distribute. The defendants are also charged with possessing firearms in furtherance of the marijuana-trafficking crimes and face charges of conspiring to launder the proceeds of marijuana trafficking.

This case is the product of an extensive/joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Kern County Sheriff's Office, Bakersfield Police Department, Southern Tri-County High Intensity Drug Task Force, and the Internal Revenue Service.

According to court records, Nature's Medicinal was incorporated under the laws of California by CHAVEZ, JR., who referred to himself as the CEO of the company. Court records further indicate that CHAVEZ, Sr., was referred to by corporate records as the Treasurer of Nature's Medicinal and owned the real property upon which the business operated. According to the Indictment, between September 2004 and February 2006, the business earned 16 million dollars from selling the marijuana with a cost of 5.5 million.

Court records show that CHAVEZ, SR., and CHAVEZ, JR., reopened the dispensary after law enforcement executed search and seizure warrants on the business and personal residences of the owners on May 1, 2007. The defendants were arrested after additional search and seizure warrants were executed on July 16, 2007. Both warrant executions resulted in the seizure of more than 200 pounds of marijuana and marijuana laced food products, more than \$57,000 in cash, and two firearms which were found at the business.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kathleen A. Servatius, who is prosecuting the case, if convicted, CHAVEZ, SR., and CHAVEZ, JR., face federal penalties of a mandatory 20-year term of imprisonment and a fine of one million dollars on the charge of conducting a criminal enterprise. All of the charged individuals face sentences of up to 40 years and fines as high as two million dollars if convicted of conspiring to money launder and conspiring to distribute marijuana, and mandatory five-year terms of imprisonment (and as high as life) and fines of \$250,000 for the firearms charges. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned on July 30, 2007, in the United States District Court in Fresno and enter pleas of not guilty.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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